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AUTHOR Hopkins, Keith W.
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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were: (1) to attempt to identify the characteristics of community college students and to recognize the implications for student personnel services; (2) to delineate the functions of student personnel services; and (3) to describe the characteristics and training needed by student personnel workers. (Author/SGM)

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RATIONALE AND DIRECTIONS FOR STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by

Keith W. Hopkins

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Introduction

The three quotes immediately below, are selected for their sequential relationship to the development of the topic - community colleges and student personnel services. To even the most casual observer, unlike the traditional post-secondary school institutions, the community college is concerned with (and indeed basic to its very philosophy) the complete development of the student. As a consequence of this philosophy, although recognition has been late in arriving, student personal services are attempting to provide those services which will attempt to meet the complete development of the student.

> Community colleges orientated themselves to serve student needs whatever they may be, ...
>
> Community college faculty rate the goals of knowledge in the academic disciplines twelfth out of the twenty goals, far below the vocational and personal development of students and also below a more generalized goal of instilling intellectual curiosity in the students and stimulating a desire for livelong learning.[1]

> The prime function of student personal services is to assist students in making decisions which affect their educational, occupational, social and personal lives:
> 1. in understanding and evaluating his potentialities and limitations; and,
> 2. in discovering and developing ways and means of working out his problems and taking full advantage of his opportunities.[2]

> What is being suggested is that the co-curriculum within the student personal services function can more than supplement; it can be an equal partner to the formal curriculum in the development of intellectual-cultural values.[3]

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1 Cross, K. Patricia. "What Do You Know About the Goals of Community Colleges?" Community and Junior College Journal, 44:7 (April, 1974), pp. 34-35.

2 Monroe, Charles R. Profile of the Community College. Washington: Jossey-Bass, Inc; 1972, p. 163.

3 Collins, Charles C. cited in, O'Banion, Terry, and Thurston, Alice. Student Development Programs in Community Coleges. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc; 19 , p. 17.

Unlike universities and colleges, the origins of which can be traced back centuries, the development of student personal services are a relatively recent phenomenon. O'Banion and Thurston,[4] and Monroe[5] trace the development back to the early part of the century when college deans of men and women,

> were largely responsible for dealing with students who were incapable of self-discipline and obeying rules and regulations of the institution.[6]

This approach continued through the 1930's until the 1940's, when at least some recognition was being paid to the student counseling and guidance function, and the use of standardized tests had come into vogue. The 1950's saw the emergence of what O'Banion and Thurston describe as,

> the most prevalent model of the student personnel worker...of maintenance and service man. In this model, the student personnel program is a series of services scattered around the campus: financial aid, registration, admissions, student activities, academic advising....[7]

Government recognition of the importance of student personnel services did not occur until 1958 with the passage of Public Law 85-864 in which Congress,

> declared guidance is essential for the best development of talent. Career planning and the identification of talent are basic educational functions in a democratic society.[8]

Despite this legislative recognition of the need for student personnel services, the Carnegie Commission of 1964 concluded that,

> when measured against criteria of scope and effectiveness, student personnel programs in community junior colleges are woefully inadequate.[9]

What tends to emerge from an analysis of this historical overview of student personnel services is that these services have evolved in response to social and

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4 O'Banion and Thurston. Student Development Programs in the Community Junior College.

5 Monroe. Profile of the Community College.

6 ibid; p. 146.

7 O'Banion and Thurston, Op. cit. p. 8.

8 Monroe, op. cit; p. 146-147.

9 O'Banion and Thurston, loc. cit.

educational changes, but rather than evolving with these changes or even pre-empting them, they have tended to lag behind.

What student personnel services must do is develop a program which is built around the concerns that students bring with them to the community college. Student personal services are responsible for,

> helping students come to grips with the many philosophical and social questions which concern him.[10]

Only by doing this will a learning climate be produced that will allow the greatest possible development of the potential of each student to occur.

O'Banion and Thurston identify the essential outcomes of student personnel services as increases in:[11] intellectual understanding; skill competencies; socially responsible behavior; flexibility and creativity; awareness of self and others; courage to explore and experiment; openness to experience; efficient and effective ability to learn; ability to respond positively to change; a useful value system; and a satisfying life.

To achieve such goals is obviously extremely difficult, and any viable program for student personnel services must be based on relevant information. As Koos states,

> to plan strategies for complete services, the movement must have viable current information among many lines concerning these populations.[12]

The Problem

The purposes of this study were:

1. to attempt to identify the characteristics of the community college student, and the implications of these for student personnel services.
2. to delineate the functions of student personnel services.
3. to describe the characteristics and training needed by student personnel workers.

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10 Monroe. Profile of the Community College. p. 4.

11 O'Banion and Thurston. Student Development Programs in the Community Junior College. p. 9.

12 Koos, Leonard V. "Needed Research Concerning the Community College Stude Institute of Higher Education, University of Florida, Gaineville (April, 1972). p.

Methodology

A review of the relevant literature.

Delimitations and Limtations

Interpretations were specifically confined to community colleges in the United States, and value judgements made by the writer were based on the data selected by him and his limited contacts with persons in the subject area.

General

Terry O'Banion, in discussing programs for the training of student personnel workers, emphasizes the need for these workers to have a thorough understanding of the community college student. It is logical that without a thorough understanding of what they bring to the college with them - their values, expectations , fears, etc; no relevant student personal services program can be designed.

Characteristics of Community College Students

To claim universals about community college students is not only inaccurate, but naive and stupid, and to identify generalizations is questionable. However there is one universal that can be claimed, and it is the greater heterogenity of community college students compared with students in other post-secondary school institutions. To avoid identifying certain characteristics which many community college students have in common serves no useful purpose, whereas making comparisons of community college students with their four-year college counterparts usefully contributes to an understanding of their needs. For the purposes of this study community college students have been divided into two categories:

1. The student who enters the community college almost immediately after leaving secondary school, and
2. The 'adult' community college student(some years have elapsed since his/her last educational institution attendance).

1. The student who enters community college almost immediately after leaving secondary school.

Many of these students have social and personal characteristics which

> are different from those of the traditional student population at four-year colleges and universities. Concurrently, the objectives of community colleges are directed towards maximizing educational opportunities for those students who are admitted, rather than selecting for admission only students who have the best chances of earning the bachelors degree.[13]

a. Effects of Socio-economic Background

> Junior college students, as a group, come from families in the lower socio-economic classes; specifically, the education, incomes, and occupation of their fathers are lower than those of fathers of most 4-year college students.[14]

The ramifications of the socio-economic backgrounds of students on their attitudes and beliefs are quite important, and probably best listed for ease of interpretation:

> (1) America's newest college student has spent the first seventeen years of his life in a different cultural environment from that of the students we're accustomed to teaching in college. He is less likely to have seen good books and magazines around the home, less likely to have been able to retreat to a room of his own, and less likely to have been exposed to discussions of world affairs at the dinner table. Research to date indicates that students reflect rather faithfully the interests and concerns of their parents.[15]
>
> (2) There is a close relationship between the economic level of the family and the motivating of young people to attend college.[16]

Research indicates that students who come from homes in which the parents have attended college are more likely to be motivated to attend college than students from homes in which neither parent has attended college. Evidence of the persistence to stay in school also has been related to whether parents did or did not attend college:

> Parents attitudes towards colllege also bears a strong relationship to persistence in college. 70% of the college students who remained in college over the four year period of the Medsker-Trent study had stated, as high school seniors their parents definitely wanted them to attend college.[17]

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13 Klein, Ruth B. and Snyder, Fred A. "Non-Academic Characteristics and Academic Achievement," Journal of College Student Personnel, 10:5 (September, 1969), p. 3

14 Collins, in, O'Banion and Thurston. (eds.). Student Development Programs in Community Colleges, p. 14.

15 Cross, in, O"Banion and Thurston, p. 28.

16 Berry, Margaret. "Campus Culture: A Product of Its Own History," Journal of College Student Personnel, 8:1 (January, 1967), p. 4.

(3) An effect of the socio-economic environment from which the student comes, which has been very much neglected in the research, is the problems faced by the student who by attending the community college is becoming upwardly mobile educationally, socially, and eventually economically. As Collins points out,

> students who are upwardly mobile need, in a self-conscious way, to take a hard look at what is happening to them and to make some choices in class values ... A strong case could be made for this learning of greater appreciation of the values, mores, and traditions of the class, or caste, or subculture from which he comes ...[18]

The student in this situation is perhaps in the unenviable situation of becoming alienated from his home environment because of his increased education.

(4) 63% of junior college students work while attending community colleges(only 18% of university student work while attending university). In regards to the effect of working while attending college, Hay and Lindsay reached the following conclusions:

> The results of Study I, which indicated employment did adversely affect the achievement of employed baccalaureate degree students, were not supported in Study II ... However, if the number of hours worked per week is taken into account, an effect does emerge. Students working 16 or more hours per week had consistently lower mean term GPA's than non-employed students. Furthermore there was a trend for students working up to 16 hours per week to have a mean term average as high or higher than non-employed students ...
>
> Once these characteristics have been isolated then counselors can use this information in advising students about part-time employment ...
>
> As more and more colleges and junior colleges open their doors, the need for financially strained students to work will increase. This factor along with ramifications for the work study portion of the Economic Opportunity Act generates the need for additional information on the relationship of a job to the educational experiences of college students.[19]

The importance of this area of concern is further highlighted by Collins,[20] who claims that helping them(community college students) find jobs does not solve

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18 Collins, in, O'Banion and Thurston. (eds.). p. 14.

19 Hay, John E. and Lindsay, Carl A. "The Working Student: How Does He Achieve?" Journal of College Student Personnel, 10:2 (March, 1969), pp. 113-114.

20 Collins, op. cit. p. 16.

the problem, for time on the job is time away from study, and there is no evidence to suggest that working while involved in a junior college builds character, but there is evidence that it results in lower academic achievement and a higher drop out rate.

(5) Klein and Snyder studied the relationship between non-academic characteristics and academic achievement among community college students. There findings were:[21]

a. achiever students intended to live at home to a greater extent than did underachiever students.

b. all of the small number of married and engaged students were in the achiever group.

c. achiever students preferred a teaching role to a greater extent than did underachiever students, and underachiever students preferred a role of administrator to a greater extent than did achiever students.

d. achiever students expressed a greater degree of independence from outside influences in going to college than did underachiever students.

b. Values

(6) Values are necessarily very much related to the socio-economic environment, but they deserve a separate assessment because of their strong influence on the direction a student will take in his total development. As Collins states,

> Values are a strong determinent of behavior, and unless a student does come to value intellectual pursuits, his moment-to-moment motivation in enterprises of the mind is not likely to be strong.[22]

There tends to be a great deal of commonality between writers such as Monroe, Collin Cross, Matson, and O'Banion and Thurston, regarding the values held by community college students. Most agreement centers around the following:

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21 Klein and Snyder, "Non-Academic Characteristics and Academic Achievement," pp. 328-331.

22 Collins, in, O'Banion and Thurston, p. 16.

i. his/her pursuits are more practical-materialistic than intellectual-cultural.

ii. exhibit authoritarian characteristics.

iii. conformist and conservative, and his perceptions of the world are clear cut, detests hypocrisy and deceit.

iv. cautious and controlled and lack self-confidence in themselves.

v. have lower educational and occupational aspirations than their peers who begin in 4-year colleges. However research indicates that the community college experience tends to increase their educational and occupational aspiration relatively more than the 4-year college experience increases its clients educational and occupational aspirations.

vi. uncertain of their interests and doubt if they have the motivation to sustain them through a full college program.

vii. they seek more certain pathways to the occupational success and financial security which they value so highly.

It should be emphasized that the importance of practical considerations to the community college student, as opposed to intellectual and cultural considerations, is one that permeates practically all the literature concerning community college students. It appears to be related to the students socio-economic backgrounds, in as much as those in the lower and middle classes tend to place greater emphasis on the need to be financially secure and to succeed in business. For students this means that their education is the pathway to a better(more money) job and upward social mobility(more prestigious vocation). This is not unlike the attitudes that were fostered as a reaction to the Great Depression of the late 1920's and early 1930's, and is perhaps a carry-over from that era.

c. Finance

(7) The chief reason given for attending a junior college are the low tuition and charges. But also listed as one of the main reasons for dropping out of college is lack of financial support.[23]

Inplications

(1) Many students will come to the community college with little understanding of:

a. the college environment
b. health and health services
c. educational necessities - study habits, learning skills, base knowledge, discussing and critical analysis techniques, etc.

(2) Students will enter the community college lacking intrinsic motivations and

(3) There must be an attempt to provide the student with a means for attaining accommodation between his changing educational and social circumstances and those of his/her home environment.

(4) There must be an inverse relationship between the number of credit hours taken by a student and the number of hours the student works. This will necessarily vary from student to student , and on the particular course and work he is attemptin

(5) Special provisions must be made for students who are living away from home, e.g. costs, diet, peer group associations, recreation and company, etc.

(6) There must be development of the student's self-concept(including self-confidence) and his occupational and educational aspirations. There does not appear to be any negativeness in his practical-materialistic orientations, in fact, these can probably be used to his advantage, particularly in the area of course and vocational selections.

(7) Students must be made more aware of the financial support available and must be made to feel that there is no "stigma" attached to receipt of this aid.

Adult Students

Many observers of the community college fail to realize that the community college student is, on the average, older than the 4-year college student, and a large proportion of the community college students are in their late 20's, their 30's and older. Because of the lack of perception for this group there has been limited activity in developing student personal services for them. Some of their identified characteristics are:[24]

1. They have loosely defined goals.

2. The adult student is not able to explore educational and occupational areas in a foot-loose manner like his younger counterpart.

3. Community college education is a new experience, in that it has been many years since they last attended school.

4. Many adults just lack the sophistication of their younger counterparts.

5. The adult must often give commitment to community college education a secondary role, for his primary commitment is not to the educational institution. Most of the adult student's energies are directed towards a job, a family, or a combination

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24 Griswold, Kenneth W. "Counseling With Adult Students," Adult Leadership 20:3 (September, 1971), p. 103., and Jackard, Charles R. "Adult Counselors and Counselors in the Community College," Adult Leadership, 21:9(March, 1973), p. 281.

of the two. Education is only a sideline.

6. The anxiety of the adult student is often highlighted by the physical changes occurring in the middle-aged adult, e.g. decrement of vision, hearing, etc.

Implications

The adult student will need someone to talk to, someone who can accept their fears and uncertainties without condemnation and can counsel and guide them in realistic decisions. The adult student has to be counseled into accepting and working around his limitations - , family, prior educational experience, and physical. This may require counseling by a person of his particular generation, who he will be able to"identify with" more readily.

Functions of Student Personal Services

Having identified some of the characteristics of the community college student and the implications that can be drawn from the characteristics, it can be readily deduced that student personal services must be a multi-functional program. The functions of student personal services should include:[25]

I. Orientation Functions - (1) pre-college information; (2) student induction; (3) group orientation; (4) career information;

II. Appraisal Function - (5) personal records; (6) educational testing; (7) applicant appraisal;

III. Consulting Function - (8) student counseling; (9) student advisement; (10) applicant counseling or admissions counseling; (11) adult and minority group counseling;

IV. Participative Function - (12) co-curricular activities; (13) student self-government; clubs and athletics(intramural and intercollegiate);

V. Regulation Functions - (14) student registration; (15) academic regulations; (16) transfer regulations; (17) social regulations;

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25 Based on,Monroe. Profile of the Community College. pp. 156-157.

VI. Service Functions - (18) financial aids; (19) placement for employment; (20) health services; (21) remedial clinics;

VII. Organizational Functions - (22) program articulation with the feeder high schools and transfer senior colleges and universities; (23) in-service education for the personnel staff; (24) program evaluation; and (25) administrative organization.

The question which logically follows from a delineation of the functions of student personal services is, "How do we prepare and organize persons to carry out these functions?"

Programs for the Preparation of College Student Personnel Workers

The tasks of the college personnel worker are many and varied and require personal qualities and skills perculiar to the area in which he/she is working. In general terms the personnel worker must be committed to positive human development; be willing to admit deficiencies, to inquire and experiment; possess the skills and the expertise that will enable him to implement programs for the realization of human potential; and understand the social system in which all members of the academic community live and work as well as ecological relationships of those members in the academic setting. Terry O'Banion, a prolific writer in this area, suggests that the core of experiences which should be common to all college and university student personnel workers includes:[26]

1. Psychology - social, developmental, personality theory, learning theory, and development and characteristics of young adults.
2. Counseling Principles and Techniques - theory and case studies.
3. Practicum in Student Personnel Work.
4. An Overview of Student Personnel Work in Higher Education - orientation, financial aids, placement, student activities, admissions, registration and records, etc.
5. The Study of the College Student - nature, characteristics, needs, differring life patterns of men and women.
6. Sociology and Anthropology - including processes of social and cultural change, urban society, sociometrics, social institutions, population, uses of leisure, and assessment of cultural mores and folkways.
7. Higher Education - history, setting, objectives, curriculum , finance, administration and organization, etc.

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26 O'Banion, Terry. "Programs for Preparing College Student Personnel Workers" Journal of College Student Personnel, 10:4 (July, 1969), pp. 249-251.

Organization of Student Personal Services

1. Organized in a manner that allow the workers to permeate the entire campus, i.e. some decentralized method of operation.

2. There should be a number of location and organizational(counseling) climates within the one institution.

3. The counseling services should not be located within the administration building, because often students associate the administration with discipline and regulations.

4. There should not be a"special" student personal services area because again some student will be apprehensive about being identified as "in need of help."

5. There must be a close working relationship between the instructional staff and the student personal services workers - they must complement each other.

6. Built into the organization must be the recognition of the need to develop more effective utilization of available skills and resources, particularly with the onset of the squeeze between growing enrollments and lower levels of financial supp

7. The overriding key to organization is two-way accessibility and communications.

Conclusion

There are many, both faculty and students, who have rejected the need for student personal services. This paper has attempted to identify some of the characteristics of the community college students which make it essential for community colleges to develop their student personal services, as a viable and intricate part of the total college program. In simple terms, it would be foolish and expensive to offer universal education, if programs cannot be designed which will improve the educational, social and vocational development of each student, so that he can contribute to an improvement in the overall quality of life of the society. To contribute to these developments at the post-secondary school level means that an institutional climate must be provided which deals with "what is"(those things the students brings with him to the institution - his unique characteristics), not with what some "would like it to be." This means students personal services as identified in this paper.

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